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UNCLAS COLOMBO 000935

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MALDIVES: LETTER TO SECRETARY FROM FOREIGN MINISTER

1. On May 20 the Embassy received by fax a diplomatic note from the Government of Republic of Maldives conveying the text of a letter from Foreign Minister Fathulla Jameel to the Secretary. The text of the note follows below:

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2. Begin text:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America for the Republic of Maldives and has the honor to quote below a message from Honorable Fathulla Jameel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives, to Her Excellency Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Quote:

Excellency,

It was with deep concern that the Government of Maldives heard news reports last week that interrogators at Guantanamo Bay had desecrated the Holy Quran.

However, we were pleased that the Government of the United States had taken a very positive stance on the matter. Your own statement before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs on 12 May 2005, and that of State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher on 11 May 2005 at the daily press briefing re-affirmed the US Government's uncompromising belief in religious tolerance and its commitment to upholding the rights of individuals to worship freely and without harassment.

We do appreciate your assurance that the matter would be investigated at the appropriate levels and that anyone found responsible for the act would be made accountable.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Unquote.

End text.

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